NUMB. CCCCLIII.

The SPECTATOR.

ſt natura Hominum Novitatis avida. Plin. apud Lill.

Friday, Auguſt 8. 1712.

THERE is no Humour in my Countrymen, which I am more enclined to wonder at, than their general Thirſt after News. There are about half a Dozen genious Men, who live very plentifully upon s Curioſity of their Fellow Subjects. They all them receive the ſame Advices from abroad, d very often in the ſame Words; but their y of Cooking it is ſo different, that there is Citizen, who has an Eye to the Publick Good, t can leave the Coffee-houſe with Peace of Mind, fore he has given every one of them a Reading. eſe ſeveral Diſhes of News are ſo very agreeae to the Palate of my Countrymen, that they are only pleaſed with them when they are ſerved up , but when they are again ſet cold before them, thoſe penetrating Politicians who oblige the blick with their Reflections and Obſervations on every Piece of Intelligence that is ſent us m abroad. The Text is given us by one Sett of iters, and the Comment by another.

But notwithſtanding we have the ſame Tale told in ſo many different Papers, and if Occaſion reires in ſo many Articles of the ſame Paper; Notwithſtanding in a ſcarcity of Foreign Poſts we hear e ſame Story repeated, by different Advices from *ris*, *Bruſſels*, the *Hague*, and from every great Town in *Europe*; Notwithſtanding the Multitude Annotations, Explanations, Reflections, and vari- Readings which it paſſes through, our Time lies avy on our Hands till the Arrival of a freſh Male: We long to receive further Particulars, to hear what ll be the next Step, or what will be the Conſequences of that which has been already taken. A Weſterly Wind keeps the whole Town in Suſpence, and puts a ſtop to Converſation.

This general Curioſity has been raiſed and inflamed by our late Wars, and, if rightly directed, might be of good uſe to a Perſon who has ſuch a Thirſt awakened in him. Why ſhould not a Man, who takes Delight in reading every thing that is new, apply himſelf to Hiſtory, Travels, and other Writings of the ſame kind, where he will find perpetual Fuel for his Curioſity, and meet with much more Pleaſure and Improvement, than in theſe Papers of the Week. An honeſt Tradeſman, who languiſhes a whole Summer in expectation of a Battel, and perhaps is balked at laſt, may here meet with half a dozen in a Day. He may read the News of a whole Campain, in leſs time than he now beſtows upon the Products of any ſingle Poſt. Fights, Conqueſts and Revolutions lie thick together. The Reader's Curioſity is raiſed and ſatisfied every Moment, and his Paſſions diſappointed or gratified, without being detained in a State of Uncertainty from Day to Day, or lying at the Mercy of Sea, or Wind. In ſhort, the Mind is not here kept in a perpetual Gape after Knowledge, nor puniſhed with that Eternal Thirſt, which is the Portion of all our Modern News-mongers and Coffee-houſe Politicians.

All Matters of Fact, which a Man did not know before, are News to him; and I do not ſee how any Haberdaſher in *Cheapſide* is more concerned in the preſent Quarrel of the Cantons, than he was in that of the League. At leaſt, I believe every one will allow me, it is of more Importance to an *Engliſhman* to know the Hiſtory of his Anceſtors, than that of his Contemporaries, who live upon the Banks of the *Danube* or the *Boryſthenes*. As for thoſe who are of another Mind, I ſhall recommend to them the following Letter, which comes from a Projector, who is willing to turn a Penny by this remarkable Curioſity of his Countrymen.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

'YOU muſt have obſerved, that Men who frequent Coffee-houſes, and delight in News, 'are pleaſed with every thing that is Matter of Fact,

'ſo

‘ ſo it be what they have not heard before. A Vi-
‘ ctory, or a Defeat, are equally agreeable to them.
‘ The ſhutting of a Cardinal's Mouth pleaſes them
‘ one Poſt, and the opening of it another. They
‘ are glad to hear the *French* Court is removed to
‘ *Marli*, and are afterwards as much delighted with
‘ its Return to *Verſailles*. They read the Advertiſe-
‘ ments with the ſame Curioſity as the Articles of
‘ Publick News; and are as pleaſed to hear of a
‘ Pye-bald Horſe that is ſtray'd out of a Field near
‘ *Iſlington*, as of a whole Troop that has been en-
‘ gaged in any Foreign Adventure. In ſhort, they
‘ have a Reliſh for every thing that is News, let
‘ the matter of it be what it will; or to ſpeak
‘ more properly, they are Men of a Voracious Ap-
‘ petite, but no Taſte. Now, Sir, ſince the great
‘ Fountain of News, I mean the War, is very near
‘ being dried up; and ſince theſe Gentlemen have
‘ contracted ſuch an inextinguiſhable Thirſt after it;
‘ I have taken their Caſe and my own into Conſi-
‘ deration, and have thought of a Project which
‘ may turn to the Advantage of us both. I have
‘ Thoughts of Publiſhing a daily Paper, which ſhall
‘ comprehend in it all the moſt remarkable Occur-
‘ rences that paſs in every little Town, Village and
‘ Hamlet, that lie within ten Miles of *London*, or in o-
‘ ther Words, within the Verge of the Penny-Poſt. I
‘ have pitched upon this Scene of Intelligence for two
‘ Reaſons; firſt, becauſe the Carriage of Letters will be
‘ very cheap; and ſecondly, becauſe I may receive
‘ them every Day. By this means my Readers will have
‘ their News freſh and freſh, and many worthy Ci-
‘ tizens, who cannot Sleep with any Satisfaction at
‘ preſent, for want of being informed how the
‘ World goes, may go to Bed contentedly, it be-
‘ ing my Deſign to put out my Paper every Night at
‘ nine a Clock preciſely. I have already eſtabliſhed
‘ Correſpondencies in theſe ſeveral Places, and
‘ received very good Intelligence.

‘ By my laſt Advices from *Knights-bridge* I hear that
‘ a Horſe was clapped into the Pound on the third
‘ Inſtant, and that he was not releaſed when the Let-
‘ ters came away.

‘ We are inform'd from *Pankridge*, that a dozen
‘ Weddings were lately celebrated in the Mother
‘ Church of that Place, but are referred to their
‘ next Letters for the Names of the Parties concerned.

‘ Letters from *Brompton* adviſe, That the Widow
‘ *Blight* had received ſeveral Viſits from *John Mill-*
‘ *dew*, which affords great matter of Speculation in
‘ thoſe Parts.

‘ By a Fiſherman which lately touched at *Ham-*
‘ *merſmith*, there is Advice from *Putney*, that a
‘ certain Perſon well known in that Place, is like
‘ to loſe his Election for Church-warden; but this
‘ being Boat News, we cannot give entire Credit
‘ to it.

‘ Letters from *Paddington* bring little more,
‘ than that *William Squeak*, the Sow-gelder, paſſed
‘ through that Place the 5th Inſtant.

‘ They adviſe from *Fulham*, that things remained
‘ there in the ſame State they were. They had In-
‘ telligence, juſt as the Letters came away, of a Tub
‘ of excellent Ale juſt ſet abroach at *Parſons Greens*;
‘ but this wanted Confirmation.

‘ I have here, Sir, given you a Specimen of the
‘ News with which I intend to entertain the Town,
‘ and which, when drawn up regularly in the form
‘ of a News Paper, will, I doubt not, be very ac-
‘ ceptable to many of thoſe Publick-Spirited Rea-
‘ ders, who take more delight in acquainting them-
‘ ſelves with other Peoples Buſineſs than their own.
‘ I hope a Paper of this kind, which lets us know
‘ what is done near home, may be more uſeful to
‘ us, than thoſe which are filled with Advices from
‘ *Zug* and *Bender*, and make ſome Amends for that
‘ Dearth of Intelligence, which we may juſtly appre-
‘ hend from times of Peace. If I find that you re-
‘ ceive this Project favourably, I will ſhortly trou-
‘ ble you with one or two more; and in the mean
‘ time am, moſt worthy Sir, with all due Reſpect,

Your moſt obedient,

and moſt humble Servant.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

On Thurſday next will be Publiſhed,

A Practical Expoſition of the Beatitudes, in the firſt Part of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount. By James Gardiner, M. A. Sub Dean of Lincoln. Alſo the Iliad of Homer, with Madam Dacier's Notes, Mr. Johnſon's Grammatical Notes, and a large Poetical Index to the whole. In 5 Volumes, 12mo. with 26 Copper Plates; finely Printed on an Elziver Letter. Both Printed for Bernard Lintott, between the two Temple Gates in Fleetſtreet, of whom may be had Dr. Bentley's Horace, Tranſlated into Engliſh.

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